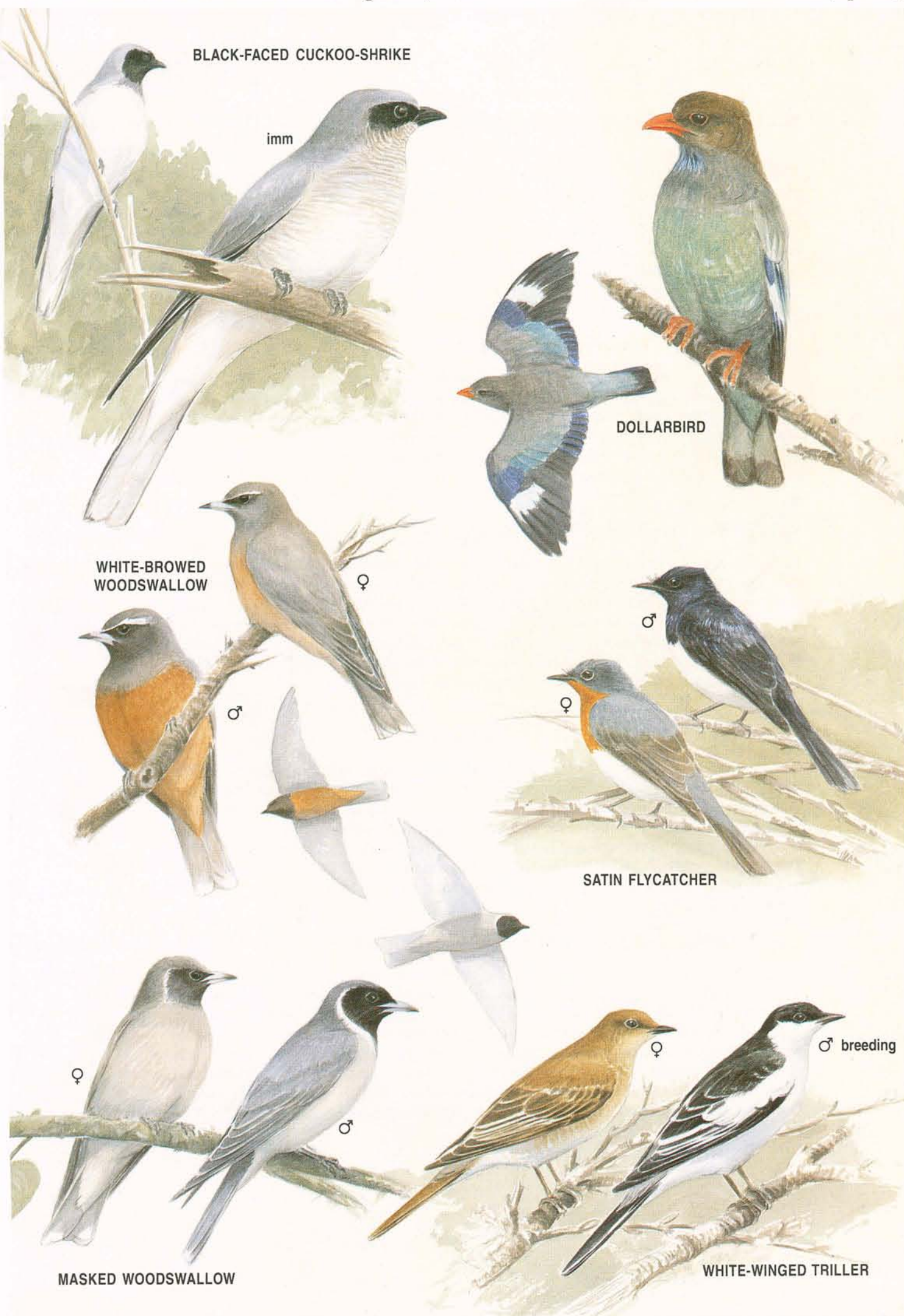


Passerines are the largest group of birds. They are small to medium sized land birds found worldwide, except on Antarctica. All species have four toes, three pointing forward and one back, well-adapted for perching. Most species are song-birds, with complex musical calls, but there are exceptions (e.g. crows). They show great diversity of form, behaviour and breeding biology.

WHITE-WINGED TRILLER *Lalage tricolor*

Rare Australian vagrant

18 cm. Breeding male black and white with a grey rump. Female and immature brown with buff feather edges. Non-breeding male like female, but wings black and white. Feeds mainly on insects taken in foliage or by swooping to ground from a perch. Male song, uttered while perched and in flight, is Chaffinch-like in form, a descending 'chiff-chiff-chiff-joey-joey-joey', ending with a Canary-like trill. **Habitat:** One NZ record: in a Dunedin garden, 1969. [Sp 292]



CUCKOO-SHRIKES and TRILLERS

Campephagidae

72 species in Africa and Asia; 2 vagrants reach New Zealand.

This family superficially resembles cuckoos by plumage colouring and slender silhouette, and shrikes by their bill shape, but they have

no direct connection with either. Their plumage is usually mostly grey and black or, in trillers, black and white. The bill is short, stout and decurved near the tip, and they eat mainly insects. Their flight is undulating like that of a cuckoo.

292. WHITE-WINGED TRILLER

Lalage tricolor

Plate 65

Size: 18 cm

Distribution: In Australia, they breed only on the mainland. Some migrate to southern areas in spring to breed and then head north in autumn, reaching New Guinea. They are summer vagrants in Tasmania. There is one New Zealand record, of a male, seen in February–June 1969 at Macandrew Bay, Otago Peninsula.

Behaviour: Trillers feed on insects in the outer foliage of trees, hover close to the ground or alight on the ground to feed on insects. They fly rapidly with slight undulations. The call, heard mostly at dawn and dusk in New Zealand, was 'rather liquid, descending and with a similar pattern to the first part of a Chaffinch's song'.

Reading: McPherson, B. 1973. *Notornis* 20: 46–48.